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MONTANA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING Newsline

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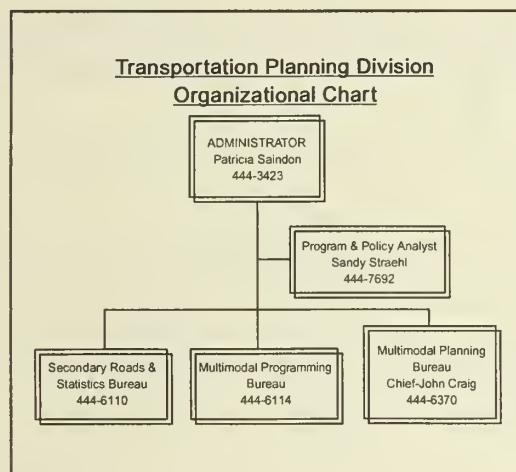
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ON A NEW COURSE FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is forging an exciting new course in transportation planning. By fully embracing the planning framework set forth in the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), MDT is committed to providing a transportation system that will carry Montanans into the 21st Century.

The backbone of ISTEA is to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner. The Transportation Planning Division of MDT is working hard on state and federal programs to meet these national goals. And recently, MDT initiated an internal restructuring that facilitates this work.

Several months ago Governor Racicot approved MDT Director Marvin Dye's proposal to combine all of MDT's planning functions into

a single division. The result is an integrated planning office, where transit, rail and highway planning are all closely coordinated. This type of multimodal planning can help MDT become more efficient.



Our new planning organization will also help us deliver better service to our customers. MDT's closely coordinated planning staff is now more equipped to serve the traveling public.

The Transportation Planning Division, headed by Patricia Saindon, consists of three bureaus. The Division is responsible for planning,

research, project selection and programming functions for all surface modes of transport.

Together the Transportation Planning Division is working on programs that will help foster an economically efficient and environmentally sound transportation system.

One result of this reorganization is a change in the format of this publication. The Newsline is a continuation of the former Transit Newsline, but we have broadened the scope to reflect the multi-modal nature of the Planning Division. You can expect to find information about all modes of transportation - from air to passenger rail. The Newsline is your link to the latest information about new programs, transportation issues and special projects. The Newsline will continue to be your most comprehensive source of information regarding transportation planning programs in Montana.

MOVING MONTANA INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Do you work, shop, recreate or do business in Montana? If you are like most Montanans, you depend daily on our transportation system to enhance your quality of life. Because all Montanans rely on this system, we should all have a say in how it can be improved to best meet our transportation needs. As required by the ISTEA, the MDT recently initiated the development of Montana's first statewide intermodal transportation plan. The plan, named TRANPLAN 21, will

be designed to identify how our existing transportation system can be improved to move people and goods efficiently and safely into the 21st century. People, businesses, institutions and governments will work closely with MDT to shape the plan.

During the next year, as MDT works to develop the Intermodal Transportation Plan, the majority of the Newslite will be devoted to keeping you informed about our progress - and to letting you know what you can do to get involved.

Three stage process

TRANPLAN 21 will be developed through a three stage planning process. It involves identifying issues, defining choices and developing a plan. The process began in September 1993 when the MDT solicited bids from qualified consulting firms to assist in developing a statewide intermodal transportation plan. The firm of Dye Management Group, Inc., was selected to assist in this effort. The plan is scheduled to be completed by January 1, 1995.

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Articles appearing in the Transportation Planning Newsletter are contributed by the staff of the MDT Transportation Planning Division.

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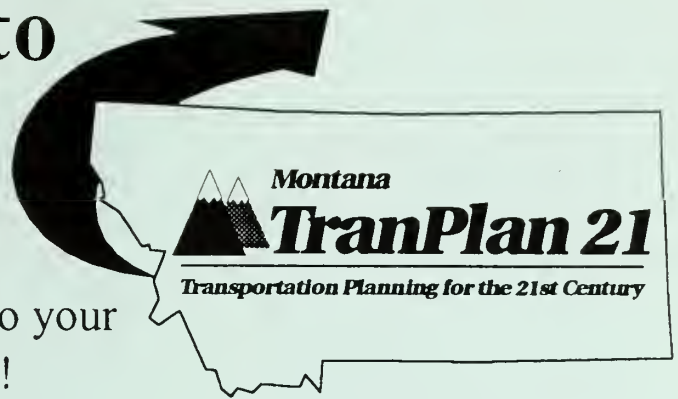
MONTANA TRANPLAN 21 DEVELOPMENT

STAGE	FUNCTION	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ELEMENTS
I	<u>Plan Formulation:</u> Outreach, I.D. Issues, Acquire and Analyze Data, Define Alternatives, Develop Draft	Regional Meetings Customer Focus Groups Citizen Panels TranPlan 21 Hotline Electronic Bulletin Board Newsletter
II	<u>Define Choices:</u> Select Alternatives, Formulate Recommendations, Define Continuing Process	Regional Meetings Customer Focus Groups Citizen Panels TranPlan 21 Hotline Electronic Bulletin Board Newsletter
III	<u>Plan Finalization:</u> Finalize Documents, Distribute Plan, Begin Implementation	

	1/94	2/94	3/94	4/94	5/94	6/94	7/94	8/94	9/94	10/94	11/94	12/94
STAGE I												
STAGE II												
STAGE III												

Move Montana into the future

We'd like your help and we'd like to know what you think. We are coming to your area to find out what's important to you!



Your Montana Department of Transportation is developing a state transportation plan for the 21st century - **TranPlan 21** will set priorities and address current and future transportation needs. We need your opinion to prepare **TranPlan 21**. Come and tell us:

- What's good about our transportation system and what needs to change?
- How are we going to get around in 20 years?
- What should our transportation system look like in the year 2015?
- How can the transportation system better serve you?

Please come to our open house to help us answer these questions, or just to find out more about **TranPlan 21**. If you have comments, but can't attend, please call **1-800-714-7296**.

Come to one of the following Open Houses!!!!

Butte

Butte-Silver Bow Public Library, 3rd Floor
226 West Broadway

Tuesday January 18, 1994

Great Falls

Civic Center, Gibson Room, 2nd Floor
#4 Park Drive

Wednesday January 19, 1994

Missoula

Council Chambers, City Hall
435 Ryman

Tuesday January 25, 1994

Kalispell

Council Chambers, City Hall
312 1st Avenue East

Wednesday January 26, 1994

Miles City

Miles Community College, Room 106
2715 Dickinson

Tuesday February 8, 1994

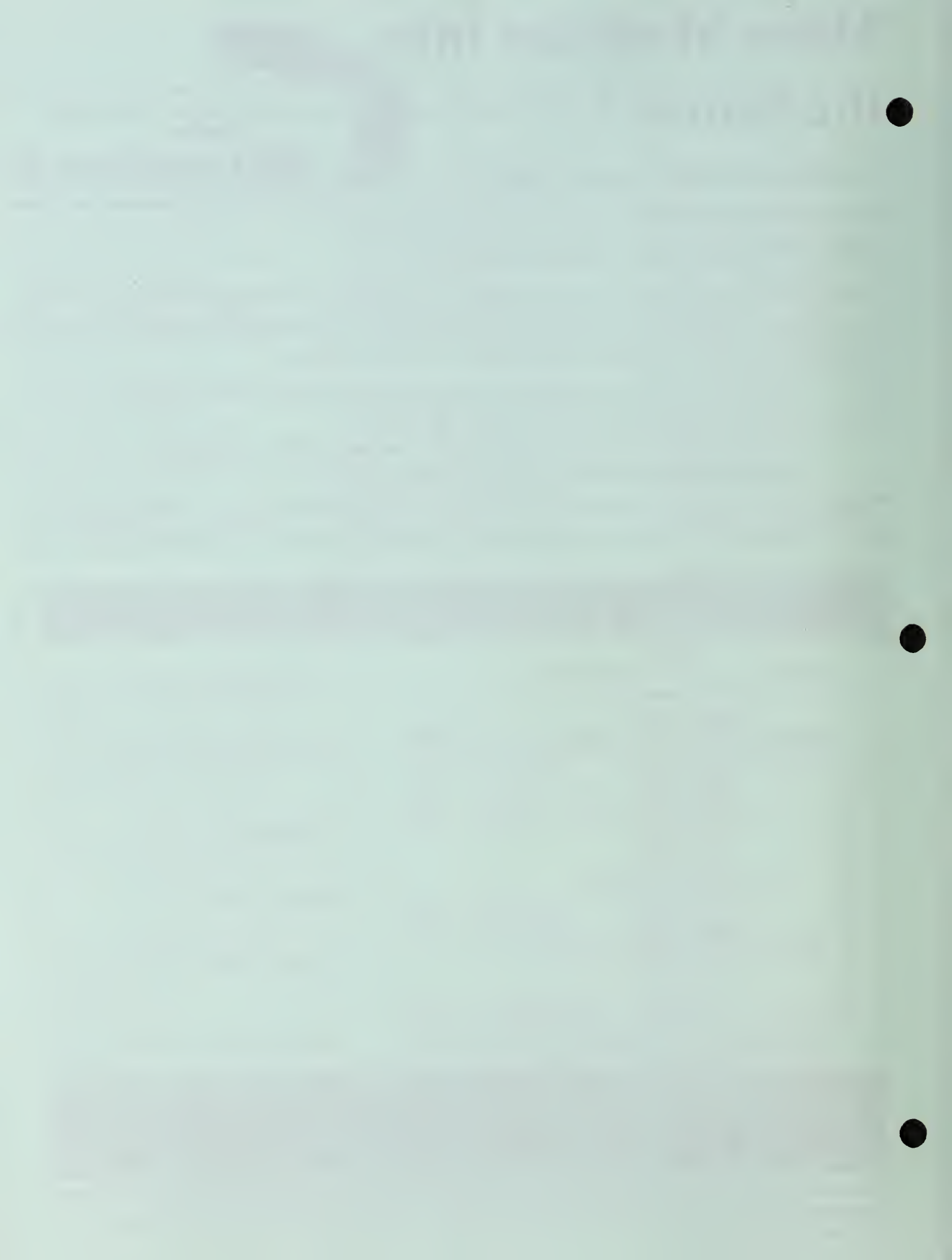
Billings

Yellowstone County Commission Board Room
Room 403A, Court House
217 North 27th

Thursday February 10, 1994

***We will offer informational presentations at 3:00 PM and 5:30 PM, or stop by and visit anytime between 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM at any of the above locations.
We hope to see you there!!!***

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all open house locations are accessible to disabled persons. For more information or for those who require accommodations for disabilities, call Bill Cloud, MDT Special Studies Section at 444-7646 in Helena. (TDD 444-7696)



Why does Montana need TRANPLAN 21?

Federal requirements

ISTEA requires all states to identify what their transportation system will look like in the 21st Century. This gives all Montana citizens an opportunity to identify issues and define choices for transportation.

Changing priorities

While the need for a sound transportation system hasn't changed, the way in which Montanans use their transportation system has. Montana residents are traveling more than ever before. For business, for shopping, for recreation -- Montanans are looking for a way to get from here to there. Montanans are also growing more committed to protecting their quality of life -- their cultural and environmental values.

In light of these and other changes, Montana must find ways to balance goals and meet the state's transportation needs. Collectively, Montanans can work together to define our transportation priorities to move us into the 21st century.

Let's all get involved

Public involvement is the key to making TRANPLAN 21 a

success. Throughout the year-long planning process, MDT will reach out to the public, affected groups and other interested parties. We will depend on your input to help shape the future of transportation in Montana. Our public involvement process will provide opportunities, during all three planning stages, to share information and discuss concerns and ideas about transportation issues. The process will include various techniques to make sure all Montanans have an opportunity to participate. These techniques include:

- **Regional Meetings -**

Informal meetings will be held around the state at key stages of the plan development. The general public, as well as representatives of the legislature and local government will be invited to attend.

- **Customer Focus Groups -**

MDT has identified a broad spectrum of groups with specific transportation interests. At critical stages in the plan development, these groups will be called to actively participate in the planning process. Targeted groups include those representing Metropolitan Planning Organizations and urban areas; bike, pedestrian, and environmental interests; commercial trucking, freight rail, air freight and intermodal

interests; passenger rail, air, and transit interests; Tribal Governments; State and Federal resource agencies; and other groups.

- **Newsletters -** This newsletter will be published throughout the plan development process. Future topics will focus on specific transportation issues such as accessibility, safety, and the environment.

- **Media -** MDT will publish meeting date time and location notices in local newspapers. We will also broadcast public information notices on local radio and TV stations.

- **TRANPLAN 21 Hotline -** A toll free number is available for you to call. Please call us with your questions, comments, or concerns. The number is 1-800-714-7296 (in Helena, please dial 444-6101).



- **Electronic Bulletin Board -** The state electronic bulletin board will be monitored for transportation issues and inquiries. See page 8 for access information.

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MDT wants to be sure all Montanans have a voice in defining their transportation system. Whether it's through our meetings, our hotline or our newsletter, we want to inform and educate you about transportation issues. But we also want to hear from you.

This is your plan; tell us what you think.

Making choices

TRANPLAN 21 is about choices. It is about improving our existing system to provide better linkages between modes of travel. It is about increased accessibility, safety and efficiency. TRANPLAN 21 is about making choices and trade-offs as Montana citizens forge a new course for our transportation future.

TRANPLAN 21 will identify the key issues facing transportation. Through the TRANPLAN 21 planning process, these key issues will be analyzed, and different transportation options for public choice will be identified. Once the public selects the best transportation options, the goals and objectives to implement the plan will be developed.

During the planning process, MDT will be looking closely at the major transportation issues facing the state. Some

of the questions we will consider include:

- How can Montana's existing transportation system best be maintained and improved?

- What are some strategies to improve Montana's access to transportation facilities?

- How should land use planning be considered in conjunction with transportation?

- To what extent should MDT consider potential social, economic, energy and environmental effects of transportation decisions?

- How can MDT incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities in projects where appropriate?

- What methods can be used to reduce transportation congestion from occurring in areas where it does not yet exist?

- What innovative mechanisms for financing transportation projects are available?

- What are some of the other important transportation issues for Montana's future?

Now is the time to start thinking. Throughout the next year, the Newslane will provide greater in-depth background on these and other important transportation issues.

MDT will work to insure you have the facts to make informed and educated transportation choices. Stay tuned.

If you have other transportation issues or concerns, please get back to us. Send us a letter, or call us on our toll-free hotline number (1-800-714-7206).



THE PLAN builds on MDT's basic mission

MDT's mission is to serve the public by establishing a transportation system that emphasizes safety, environmental preservation and cost-effectiveness.

TRANPLAN 21 is designed to support and build on Montana's fundamental transportation goals. These goals include:

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Safety - Montanans expect and are entitled to a safe transportation system. A top priority for TRANPLAN 21 is to emphasize and coordinate safety throughout the transportation system.

Environment - MDT is committed to both an environmental ethic and an advanced transportation system. These two issues can coexist. Integrating environmental considerations into all department plans, designs and actions is one of TRANPLAN 21'S goals.

Accessibility - TRANPLAN 21 is one vehicle through which MDT can work to make the transportation system accessible to all Montanans. TRANPLAN 21 will look at ways to preserve and improve the existing transportation system, including both public and private facilities.

Transportation Efficiency - Montanans expect their transportation system will be efficient and economical. TRANPLAN 21 will be committed to finding opportunities to save public and private transportation costs. TRANPLAN 21 will identify areas to improve cost efficiency and to provide better transportation choices. ■

Other happenings in Transportation Planning

Scenic byways study underway

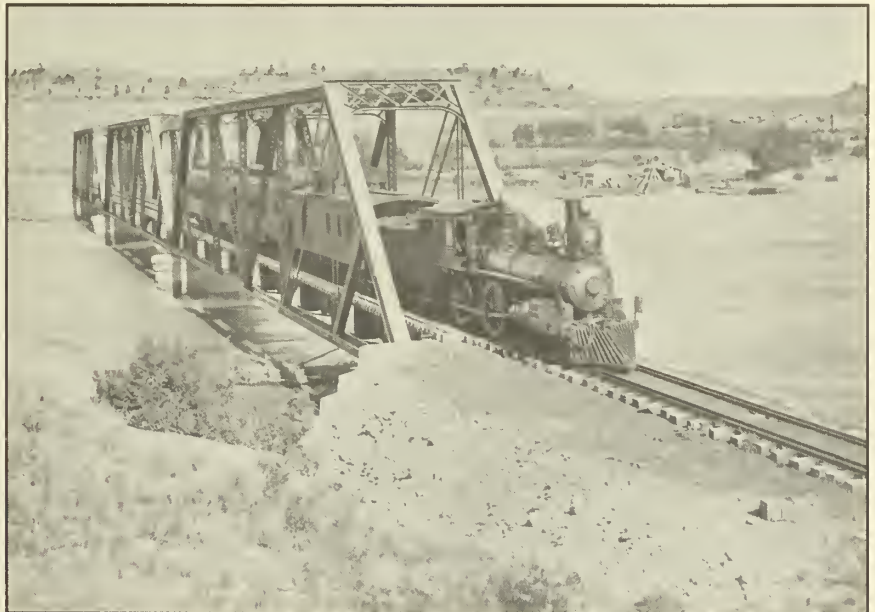
What kind of scenic byways program would work best in a diverse state such as Montana? What has worked or not worked in other states? What does it cost to manage a scenic byways program? How can we protect scenic qualities of designated routes?

These are just some of the questions that will be addressed during a nine-month MDT Scenic Byways

Feasibility Study that began in October. Funding for the study comes from an FHWA grant through the Interim National Scenic Byways Program established by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). MDT pursued the grant because of long-standing interest in a state program and the potential economic benefits a well-designed scenic byways program could bring to Montana communities.

During the study, Morrison-Maierle Environmental (MME) of Helena, in cooperation with Design Workshop of Denver, Communication Strategies of Helena and Mother Earth Consulting of Polson, will

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Northern Pacific Railroad Bridge over the Yellowstone River near Billings, 1894. (Haynes Foundation Collection, Montana Historical Society.)

seek input from a cross section of agencies and groups potentially affected by a scenic byways program. In addition, a Scenic Byways Advisory Committee of representatives from state and federal agencies and private organizations will provide expert advice on issues such as design and safety concerns, signing coordination, protection techniques, and marketing strategies. The MDT Special Studies Section is managing the study.

At the conclusion of the study, MDT will have the information necessary to determine if a scenic byways program is feasible in Montana. If it is, MDT will move forward with legislative initiatives and route inventories

necessary for the development of a successful Montana Scenic Byways Program.



Tom Brewster, Great Falls transit winner of full-size bus competition.



Jim Keller, Eagle Transit, Kalispell winner of the Paratransit Division competition.

Great Falls hosts 2nd annual bus rodeo

The Montana Transit Association, in coordination with the Montana Department of Transportation, sponsored the second annual Montana Statewide Bus ROADEO in Great Falls August 22, 1993.

A bus ROADEO is an obstacle course designed to duplicate everyday driving. This event promotes safety by encouraging and rewarding professional driving skills. It also provides participants with positive job-related motivation.

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y emphasizing the important role played by bus drivers in safe and reliable transportation to the citizens of Montana.

The Montana Bus ROADEO was conducted in two separate divisions: 1) full-size bus and 2) paratransit. There are four systems in the state that qualify for the full-size bus competition - Missoula, Great Falls, Billings and Butte. All four systems were represented. Five drivers competed in the paratransit division.

Congratulations go to Tom Brewster, Great Falls Transit, winner of the full-size bus competition and to Jim Keller, Eagle Transit of Kalispell, winner of the paratransit competition. Tom represented Montana at the national competition in New Orleans, Louisiana, held October 4, 1993. Jim Keller will represent Montana in the national competition for paratransit drivers to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the spring of 1994. All expenses are paid through the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) for the winners of each division.

Fall transit conference - What a success!

The Montana Transit Association Fall Conference was held October 13 and 14 in Butte. Transit operators and managers from across the state

attended this year's conference.

Dr. Taibi Kahler of Little Rock, Arkansas, presented the "Mastery of Management." Dr. Kahler outlined management and communication strategies for bringing individual's strengths into the work team. State and Federal updates were presented along with information on the Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan. Deanna Thielman from Eagle Transit in Kalispell discussed ways to promote community bus service. A presentation on transporting people with infectious diseases provided facts about HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis and Tuberculosis.

CTEP gaining momentum

Montana's Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is gaining momentum after a slow start. Like many other state Departments of Transportation, MDT has been scrambling to develop the framework for a program that provides transportation funding for "non-traditional" highway projects. America's DOTs are well equipped to handle highway project development and implementation, but were caught cold when ISTEA provided highway funding for such projects as historic preservation, archeological

planning and research, landscaping and scenic beautification.

Montana's CTEP design is basically complete with only a few details remaining to be worked out. Montana receives about \$6 million per year in Enhancement funding. The MDT retains approximately \$1 million and allocates the remaining \$5 million to all 56 counties and 51 cities with populations over 1,000. The allocations are based on each community's relative population to the statewide population.

There have been many misunderstandings about the program, particularly in the area of funding. **CTEP is not a grant program.** Funds are allocated to accounts for each city and county. These accounts are administered by the MDT. Payments for eligible project activities are made on a cost reimbursement basis.

In most cases, project development and implementation are the responsibility of the local governments. As CTEP funds are provided for under the federal law, all applicable federal highway rules and regulations apply. This is proving to be a difficult situation for communities not equipped to deal with the vast

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and complex highway program. In order to be eligible for CTEP funding, each project must address such things as design standards, historical clearances, environmental issues, civil rights requirements, and contract lettings to name just a few.

To date, 35 CTEP projects have been approved and 16 are pending approval for funding by the MDT. Specific federal-aid programs for each project are now being developed by the department's Fiscal Programming Section.

The MDT has developed a "Project Proposal Form" and a "Questions and Answers"

booklet as an aid to communities in developing their CTEP projects. Copies of these documents can be obtained by calling the MDT at 444-4383.

Stay Informed

To make TRANPLAN 21 a success, we need your continuing interest and involvement. If you have specific questions or comments, or would like to be included on our mailing list, please give us a call at our TRANPLAN 21 hotline - 1-800-714-7296 (in Helena, call 444-6101). Or, if you prefer, you may leave a message for us on the State Electronic

Bulletin Board System. From your personal computer, dial (406)444-5648, and leave your comment in the Department of Transportation electronic mail folder. Please use the subject heading "TRANPLAN 21."

If you would like others to receive future Transportation Planning Newslines, please call 1-800-714-7296 or write to: Montana Department of Transportation, Transportation Planning Division, Special Studies Section, PO Box 201001 Helena MT 59620-1001. ■

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